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RICH SOIL

GOOD CLIMATE

1880

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NEBRASKA

ITS

ADVANTAGES

AND

RESOURCES.

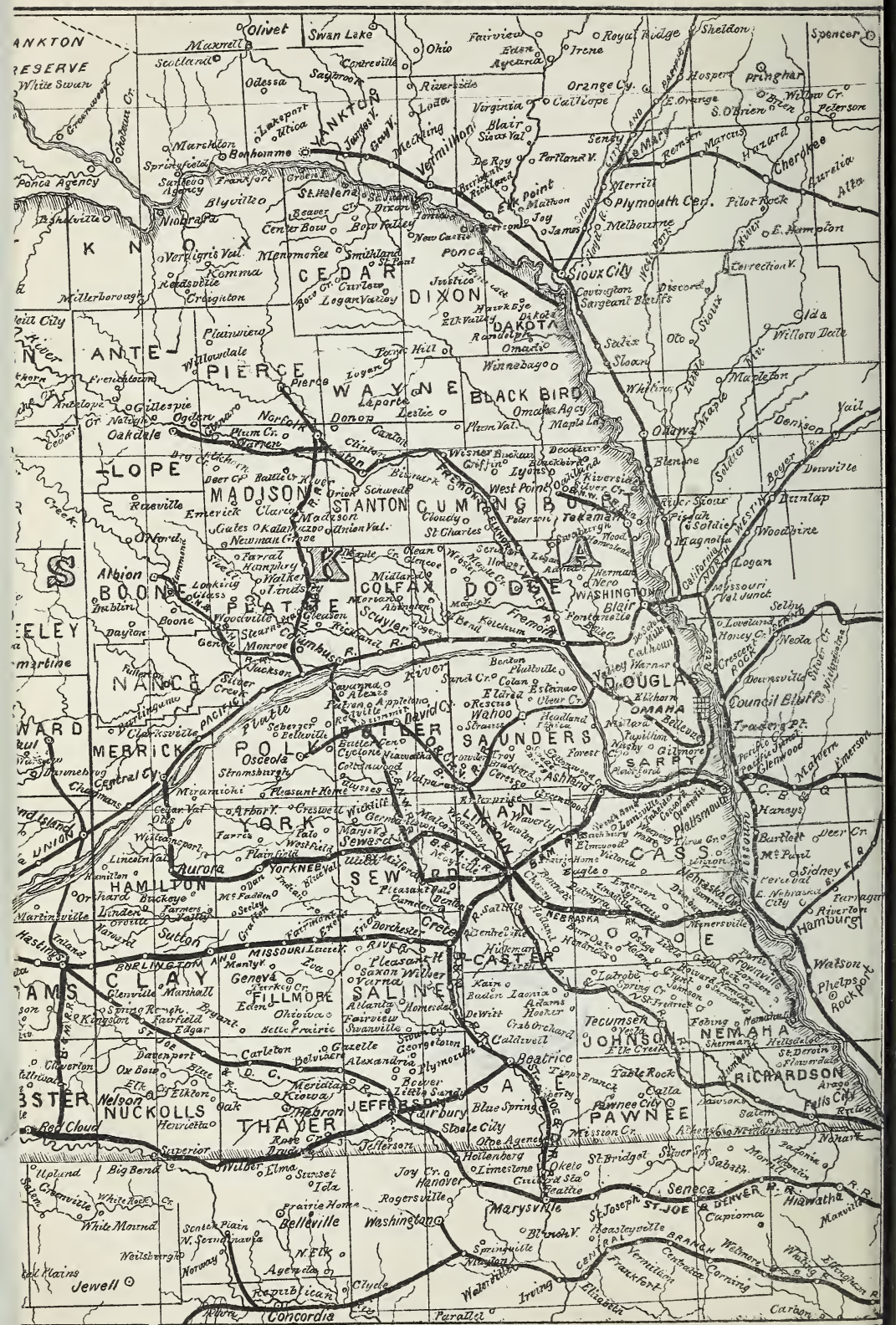
CHEAP LANDS

PURE WATER

1854









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THE STATE  
OF  
NEBRASKA  
AND  
ITS RESOURCES.

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A PAMPHLET FOR GENERAL CIRCULATION, SHOWING HOW LANDS  
AND HOMES MAY BE ACQUIRED IN THE STATE, AND THE  
PROSPECTS OF SETTLERS THEREIN.

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*ISSUED BY THE STATE.*

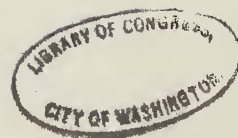
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## PREFACE.

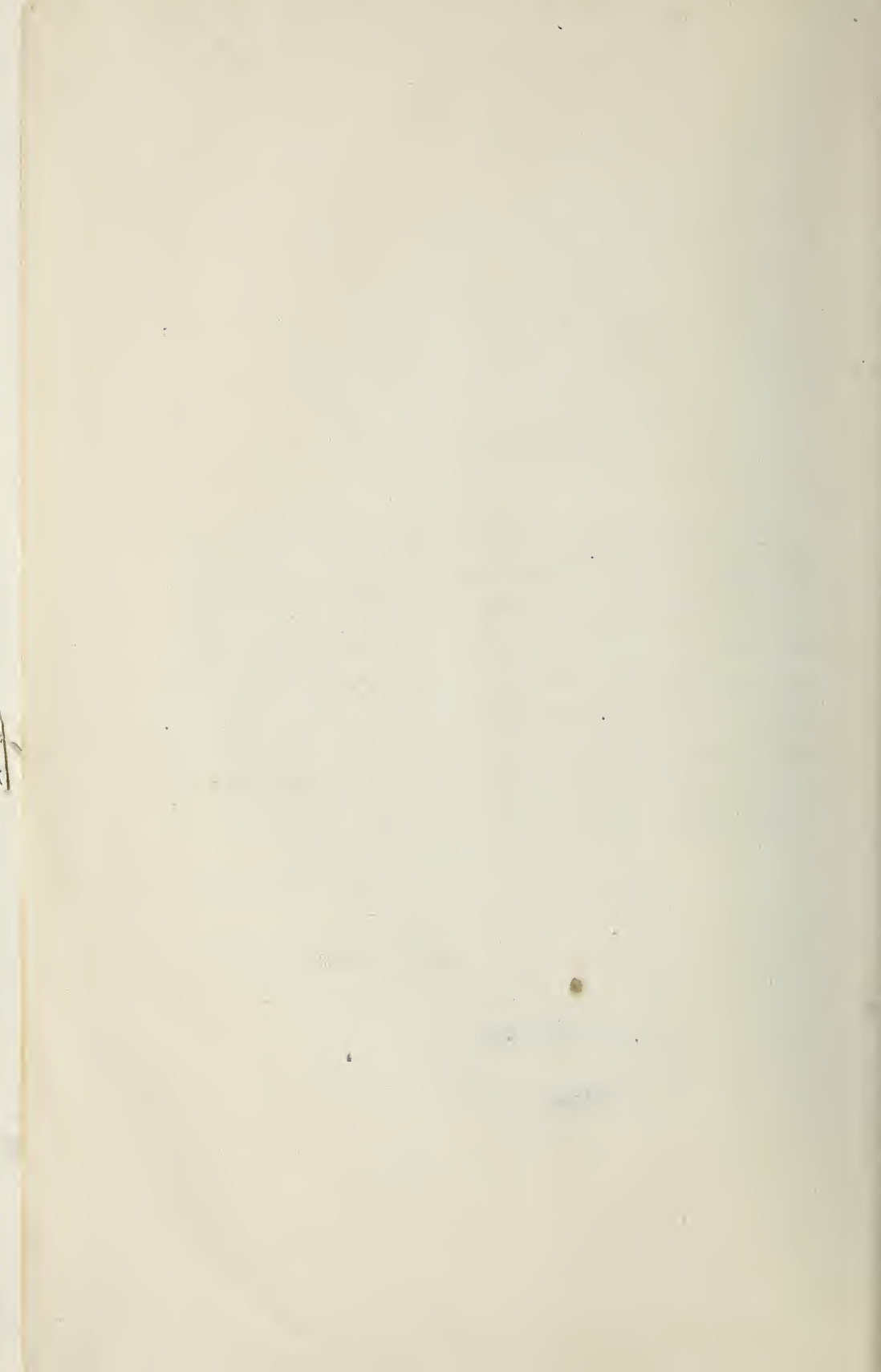
This pamphlet has been prepared for the State Departments of Nebraska, and it is intended as a general reply to manifold letters of inquiry received by the officers of the State. The pamphlet sets forth the resources of the State and the opportunities which still remain open for settlement. The careful consideration of the reader is invited to the statements made. No new state presents more inviting prospects to those East and in European countries who are considering the question of emigration from their old homes, with the view of founding new homes in a new land.

ALBINUS NANCE,

*Governor of Nebraska.*

F. M. DAVIS,

*State Land Commissioner.*



## NEBRASKA AND ITS RESOURCES.

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### INTRODUCTORY.

In folk lore there is this story. There was a man tired of the patient cultivation of his little farm; and who desired to be rich without labor. Lacking wealth, life had become "stale, flat and unprofitable." Three times he dreamed there was treasure hid under the earth in his old orchard which for years had been barren of fruit. Three is the regulation number that makes a dream true; and so, in an extacy of excitement, he revealed the secret to his wife, and began to dig. Round one tree he dug a mound of earth, and round another, until there was not a gnarled trunk about whose roots he had not let in the vitalizing air. But there was no treasure. Of course, he grew angry over his wasted labor; and he had a sorry time when his neighbors hung on his fence and laughed at his folly. Spring-time, however, and the trees blossomed. Autumn followed; and they were loaded with fruit. Years went on, the old orchard yielding a rich revenue, and so the man found there was golden treasure hid in the earth, after all; and he grumbled no more because his farm was not a literal gold mine, but worked it with vim, and his land made him as wealthy as a man has need to be. Our fathers who composed this parable knew what they were talking about quite as well as the old Greeks when they made the myth about exhausted Hercules renewing his strength at the touch of the earth mother. Gold is good; but it usually costs the miner as much to win it as it is worth. The productions of the soil are better in the long run, for it is on these that all life must base. In her agricultural productions Nebraska is rich; and will be richer. She boasts soil that is nowhere



excelled; a climate favorable to production; and pure water in abundance.

#### GEOGRAPHY OF NEBRASKA.

The map accompanying this pamphlet exhibits the area of the state, which comprises 75,995 square miles, or 46,636,800 acres, roughly speaking as large as all the New England states, or all Pennsylvania and half of New York. Its length is 412 miles, and its width about 200. It is between the parallels  $40^{\circ}$  and  $43^{\circ}$  north, thus placing the whole state in the latitude of Pennsylvania, and southern New York, and northern California, and southern Oregon; and between  $18^{\circ}$  and  $27^{\circ}$  west from Washington, or  $95^{\circ}$  and  $104^{\circ}$  west of Greenwich. The state is called prairie. So it is, in the sense of the word which means meadow; but not in that secondary sense which implies a land of uniform flatness. In real truth, Nebraska is a part of the lowest eastern grass-clothed slope of the Rocky Mountains. The eye alone will make no observer aware of this fact. Nevertheless, from the eastern to the western boundary of Nebraska, there is a gradual and uninterrupted rise of the land of about seven feet to the mile in eastern Nebraska, and from that to ten feet in the west; and thus it comes that while the land on the eastern boundary is 910 feet above sea-level, on the western boundary it is about 5,000. The surface form of the state is, of course, made by the rivers. The eastern front of the country shows bold, wooded bluffs to the Missouri, their outlines being cut and scarped into fantastic and picturesque forms by the washing water. West of the Missouri bluffs, except on the table lands, there is no flat, but a land of many changing forms—now broad bottoms, bounded by low hills; now picturesque bluffs, and, especially in the grazing region, ravines sometimes as rugged as the gulches in the gold fields. Now and again a river flows full to the bank, from which the bottom—from a mile to four or more miles wide—spreads out on either hand; but generally the streams run in deep beds, the high, steep banks and the

narrow first bench being thickly clothed with timber. The general ascending lay of the land is broken west to east by three main drainage channels. On the northern boundary of the state are the Niobrara and the Missouri rivers, of which latter the Niobrara is an affluent. The Platte, a winding, shallow, spreading stream, dotted with numerous islands, and running over a bed of white sand, flows through the whole length of the state from west to east, at a distance of 100 to 120 miles south of the Niobrara; and, 50 to 80 miles south of the Platte, the Republican river has its channel. These rivers head in, or near the mountains. Their flow is west to east; and their drainage area on the south is limited to a belt of ten to fifteen miles, and the tributary streams from that side are few. North of each stream, however, its affluents are numerous; and the general flow of their waters is south-east. This is the topography of Nebraska in barest outline; and, with the map before him, the reader can fill in the details. He can imagine the great plain ascending to higher altitudes as the mountains are approached; the rivers, west to east, making three great valleys, and two elevated divides separating the valleys; and, finally, the smaller streams exhibiting the land as broken into an almost infinite number of gently undulating hills and valleys—with great table lands on the summits—the trend of which is south-east.

#### GEOLOGY OF NEBRASKA.

In the south-eastern part of the state upper carboniferous and permian deposits come to the surface, the boundary line running south-west from Washington county to about the centre of the southern line of Thayer county. Over one-third of the state west of this line, cretaceous deposits make the surface, and west again the tertiary. The surface geology of Nebraska represents great periods in the history of the formation of the crust of the globe—glacial epochs, and ages of time, when seas and lakes covered the land, now the centre of the United States. It is for a scientific

treatise to describe in detail the accumulated changes of these eras—the grinding of the mills of the gods which produced life, and swept away life, ultimately resulting in the fertile Nebraska which is to-day. It is a marvellous story, whose record is everywhere written in Nebraska; but in this pamphlet there is not space for its telling. The final formative processes are, however, interesting to the farmer, inasmuch as they describe the land he has to till. Toward the close of the last glacial period the continent slowly uprose, and a portion of this region became dry land. Yet great fresh water lakes remained, one in Nebraska and Iowa being estimated as 500 miles long, and from 50 to 200 miles wide. There was the Missouri river, then and now the muddiest river in the world. For a thousand miles its course was, and is, through deposits readily friable, and easily worn and borne away by the water, especially as at this time at the sources of the Missouri and Yellowstone the water action was aided by the erosive action of moving ice-masses. When the river entered the great lake its current ceased, and the suspended sediment dropped to the bottom. The land was now being gradually upheaved. As it rose the waters of the loess lake were drained off by the Missouri, and its bed became a vast marsh. The present broad bottoms of the country were at that time river beds; and, with their waters, still came down the muddy debris from the mountains, and was largely deposited at the bottoms of the great streams. The land was still rising; and, as it rose, the rivers drained off the surplus waters. The river beds were cut deeper into the yielding soil; and the time ultimately came when Nebraska was fixed in the condition which exists at this day—the loess being largely the soil of the uplands, and the alluvial that of the river valleys. The two deposits are similar in chemical elements; and they form

THE RICHEST SOIL IN THE WORLD,

and most valuable for agricultural purposes, ranging in thickness from five to 150, and even 200 feet. Careful analyses of the soil

show that in the loess over eighty per cent. of the formation is finely comminuted silica: so fine that its true character can only be detected under a microscope. About ten per cent. of its substance is made up of carbonates and phosphates of lime. There are some small amounts of alkaline matter, iron and alumina; the result being a soil that can never be exhausted until every hill and valley which composes it is entirely worn away. Its finely comminuted silica gives it natural drainage in the highest degree. When torrents of rain come the water soon percolates the soil which, in its lowest depths, retains it like a huge sponge. When drouthy periods intervene, the moisture rises from below by capillary attraction, supplying nearly all the needs of vegetation in the driest seasons. The richer surface soil overlies the subsoil, and it is from eighteen inches to three and four, and even six feet thick. It is organically the same as the subsoil, but enriched with organic matter, the growth and decay of innumerable centuries—a garden soil, easily cultivated, and making the arable farm as a garden.

#### CLIMATIC CONDITIONS IN NEBRASKA.

In the first place, there is water in abundance underground, on the surface, and coming from the clouds. At a depth of twenty to sixty feet, and at some places sixty to 100, there is a thick layer of clear sand, which, in most cases, rests upon a bed of rock or clay; and, so abundant is the water in this sand, that in many places subterranean streams are formed, which are struck in sinking shafts. Everywhere abundant water, above the average in purity, is obtained at the depths named, the cost of a common tubed well being about seventy-five cents per foot. On the surface, rivers, creeks, prairie ponds and springs abound. No map yet published does justice to the numberless small streams that exist in the state, even the plats of the public surveys failing to indicate them all; and, indeed, there being large areas where running water is now found on every section, where there was none when those sur-



veys were made. The rainfall is ample. The best data accessible are the tables kept by Dr. A. L. Child, of Plattsmouth, from which the following is compiled:

YEAR	SEASON	TEMP.	SEASON	YEARLY SNOW	YEARLY RAIN AND MELTED SNOW
1866	{ Winter Spring Summer Fall	{ 19.99° 47.03° 72.78° 49.75°		11 45 inches	{ 4.10 in 8.34 " 11.95 " 7.11 " 31.70 in
1870	{ Winter Spring Summer Fall	{ 22.14° 46.17° 70.00° 42.64°		22.00 inches	{ 4.60 in 9.50 " 9.10 " 8.90 " 32.10 in
1875	{ Winter Spring Summer Fall	{ 15.06° 45.55° 71.67° 47.31°		29.26 inches	{ 2.08 in 12.48 " 28.70 " 6.96 " 50.22 in
1878	{ Winter Spring Summer Fall	{ 33.01° 52.71° 72.86° 51.98°			{ 3.57 in 12.64 " 22.48 " 4.78 " 43.47 in

The average rainfall for these five years is 32.29 as compared with 34.13, the average of eleven years in Illinois. From the middle of the state west the rainfall is somewhat less than the table indicates; but in the eastern half the average is 32, two-thirds of which is during the agricultural months; or quite as much rain at the precise time when it is needed as falls during the same months in Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and New York. A peculiarity of the rainfall is that it is mostly at nights, so that the heaviest showers, quickly draining into the land, scarcely interfere with work on the farm. The temperature is of the temperate zone—healthful and bracing to man and beast; and in which corn, small grains, apples and peaches come to rich perfection.

#### NATURAL PRODUCTIONS.

The prairie, clothed only by natural processes, presents its own testimony to the riches of the state. Its whole expanse is covered

with grasses, there being not fewer than 150 species, and the most abundant making the best pasture, showing green at the end of April, and affording feed until November. The blue-joint grows everywhere except on low bottoms. Under ordinary conditions its growth is two and a half to four feet; and on cultivated grounds it is found from seven to ten feet high. Wild oats grow on the uplands, mixed with blue-joint. This grass is relished by cattle, and is abundant. The buffalo grass, low in habit, is now found in the western half of the state. It disappears before cultivation, but it is nature's provision of food for grain-eating animals during winter, on the prairie, inasmuch as it retains its nutriment all the year round. Among other feed grasses are several varieties of bunch grass; and in the low lands a native blue-grass, and the spangle-top, which latter makes excellent hay.

#### THE NATIVE TREES.

The Nebraska prairie is not bare of trees—in fact, the native trees furnish a large list. The river bluffs are clothed with them, and the banks of the streams. There are two kinds of buckeye, two of maple, two of locust, four of ash, three of hickory, eleven of oak, twelve of willow (eight species being shrubs), three of poplar, one sycamore, black walnut, yellow pine, white cedar and red cedar. The shrubs include common juniper, pawpaw, prickly ash, five sumacs, red root, spindle tree, six species of plum, six currants and gooseberries, five dogwoods, butter bush, buffalo berry, red and white mulberry, hazelnut and beaked hazelnut. Cedars are found on the islands of the Platte, and along the Loups and the Niobrara there is a goodly quantity of pine. But the point is here: This list of trees is proof that trees flourish on the prairie; and that as much timber as is needed for all uses can be raised on the farm.

#### THE PRAIRIE, IN ITS NATURAL CONDITION,

presents the aspect the preceding pages sketch. An untilled garden-land, furnishing plenty for its wild denizens—man and beast.

Looking at it in this year, 1879, it is a marvel how Fremont and others could have come to regard it as a desert. So they did regard it; and the nation, up to the year 1850, little knew of the rich domain it possessed in the trans-Missouri region—a region which is to be the great grain and stock-producing area of the continent.

#### THE HISTORY OF NEBRASKA

shows how this “manifest destiny” of the prairie is being accomplished in the “desert” of twenty-five years ago—a period just measuring the time of settlement. The white man knew Nebraska more than twenty-five years ago. Adventurous French trappers explored its wastes, and fraternized with the Indians; and the conditions remained the same when Astor’s American Fur Company collected the furs of the region. This company established trading posts, the first of all being at Belle Vue (between Omaha and the Platte river), which was under the charge of Col. Sarpy, a member of a French family well known on the frontier, and himself noted for his enterprise, sagacity, and courage. It matters little to speak of these times—except that when men see a great river it is natural to desire to know its birthplace in the mountains, and it was in these beginnings that Nebraska had its origin. Across its prairies was the way to the west coast, and to Utah. Many an “argonaut”—as the “forty-niners” are called—never saw the sea until he reached the golden gate by way of the prairie, and the Mormon roads are still traceable across the plains. It was the establishment of frontier forts that was the next stage in Nebraska’s progress. The people there had to be fed and clothed; and the freighting system came into being. To meet the needs of this overland trade, there had to be ranches on the way, where supplies could be obtained; and hence, at convenient places, they were established. By one means or other the land was known to the outside world about 1850; and there was a crowd waiting on the Iowa and Missouri side of the Missouri to

“jump” the river as soon as the territorial act authorizing settlement was passed and proclaimed in 1854. But from Cedar county in the north to Richardson county in the south, there was no belief anywhere that any land except the Missouri bottoms was worth occupying; and a decade went by, and there were but few farms opened ten miles west of the river, the balance of the state being really the hunting grounds of the Indians. In 1864, however, the Union Pacific railroad was commenced from Omaha; and in 1869 the Burlington and Missouri River railroad, from Plattsmouth; and since then these railroads have been the largest factors in promoting Nebraska’s prosperity. In 1867 the state was admitted to the Union; and at that time Lincoln, on the prairie, was located as the capital, and is now, besides being the seat of government, the second city in the state, with a population of 10,000, while Omaha’s population numbers 25,000. This is a brief statement of dates in the short history of Nebraska. To fill up the outline sketched would require a book. In brief, the state has become a white man’s country. The Indians have yielded possession, the Pawnees quitting their reservation, which has become Nance county; and the Otoe reservation also is being settled up everywhere. In the agricultural part of the state the traveler meets with splendid farms; and, in the grazing region west, enormous herds of cattle. The reasons for the prosperity of the state will be of interest to those who are contemplating moving west, and the principal of these may be briefly stated.

#### THE GREAT FOOD BELT OF THE CONTINENT.

Men cannot make bread of sand, and so they do not settle in deserts. The United States cover 23 degrees of latitude—away to the frozen north, and down to the semi-tropic south. But, with all this choice, from the beginning of western settlement the great current of movement has been within a central belt five or six degrees in width, and “nearly corresponding with the latitudinal



length of the state of Illinois, which lies between  $36^{\circ}56'$  and  $42^{\circ}30'$ ." The proof of this is furnished by the census of 1870, which shows :

	Popula- tion	True Valuation	Wheat in Bushels	Corn in Bushels	Im'igrants born out of U. S.
11 States and 3 Ter. in latitude of Illinois.	14019314	\$12729954998	117870054	334137865	2144000
10 States, larger half in latitude of Illinois.	13211389	13105750967	104378646	240623912	2524538
Country wholly out of latitude of Illinois.	11327668	4140075345	55496926	186182772	898008

The foregoing table demonstrates a truth most important to be remembered by those who are contemplating a change of base. This is the belt in the United States in which industry obtains the most certain and highest rewards. It is temperate in climate; and a man can here work up to his best. The land is fruitful, and bears in greatest abundance those products which are necessities of life, and which have value accordingly. "South of Illinois," writes Dr. Butler, "it is too hot for wheat; north of it is too cold for corn. Accordingly, in the latitude of Illinois—that is, within three degrees north and south of the parallel of  $40^{\circ}$ —American agriculture can be more diversified than anywhere else. Farmers there are not dependent on any one single staple, but raise crops so various that a season which is pernicious to one is profitable to some other. Theirs is the three-fold cord which is not quickly broken."

#### NEBRASKA THE BEST PART OF THE BELT.

The marvel of Nebraska is that the progress of Illinois is here excelled. Consider the following figures. At the beginning of 1856 the population of Nebraska was 10,716, and at the close of 1875, 259,912, which was a twenty-five-fold increase in 20 years. In 1810 Illinois had a population of 12,282, and in 1830 157,445, a thirteen-fold increase. These figures exhibit the two states in the first period of growth. Starting with about the same popula-

tion, Nebraska doubles upon wonderful Illinois in the course of 20 years. The reason is, that in Nebraska the farmer has Nature fully on his side, a fact further manifested when

#### THE PRODUCTIONS OF THE STATE

are considered. Corn, the king of grains, is bountiful in production; and it is not unusual for 70 pounds of ear to shell 60 to 63 pounds, or four to seven pounds over the standard, the general average of production, with fair cultivation, being 50 to 60 bushels per acre. Numerous varieties of wheat are grown, the yield being 15 to 25 bushels per acre; of barley a fair yield is 30 to 40 bushels; of rye, 25 to 30 bushels; and of oats 40 to 50 bushels. Flax returns about 12 bushels per acre; and tame grasses—alfalfa, or California clover, ordinary red and white clover, Hungarian grass, timothy, millet, blue grass and orchard grass—take well to the soil and climate, and cut heavy crops of hay. The country which is good for corn, good for small grains, good for grass and hay, and has a favorable climate, must be

#### THE LOCATION FOR STOCK RAISING.

It is live-stock the civilized world most wants; and in live-stock the farmer finds wealth. If a settler open a farm in the agricultural part of the state, mixed farming is the best; and he should, therefore, combine grain and stock growing. If a man go forth to the great pastoral region, then, of course, the industry he will follow will be that of herdsman or flock-master; but, be he where he will in Nebraska, cattle, horses, sheep, and hogs are what he needs to have about him. There is in Nebraska a wide field for profitable horse-raising; and, except the few colts which farmers raise, the field is unoccupied, and large numbers of horses are annually imported into the state, which could all be raised here at much less cost than in the states whence they are imported, and sold in Nebraska at from \$80 to \$120 each. The farmer who wants to en-

gage in horse-breeding, let him come to Nebraska. He will find the broken prairie—land which, because it is not the best land laid out for the plow, sells at from \$3 to \$1 per acre—the best adapted for the purpose. In these lands draws frequently come in from all sides towards a bottom; and wind-shelters are afforded from whatever direction the wind may blow; and water, also, is ever abundant. In a location of this character a man may establish himself; put up necessary shelters for his stock at a cheap rate; breed horses or mules, and find a ready market in the state and outside of it, for the freight is an exceedingly small percentage on the value of a good horse, and the best horses can be raised in Nebraska at a much less cost than in Kentucky. For feed, horses have the native prairie grasses which are most excellent for both pasturage and hay; and corn, oats, rye, and barley are grown in great abundance, and of most excellent quality.

#### THE CATTLE FARM.

Cattle should be upon every farm, as many as the land will carry, or the owner's means afford. Away from the great ranges, it is best to have fairly good stock, which it should be the farmer's aim constantly to improve. It will be long years before there are too many beef-cattle in the world; and the market for them is as wide as civilization. Let the reader consider the price of beef in the Eastern markets and in England, and contrast that with the price at which cattle can be raised on the Nebraska prairie. In three years, with good stock, the Nebraska farmer can have a steer to weigh 1500 pounds; and he is amply paid selling at 3½ cents per pound. Under conditions like these, there is the possibility of an immense trade with the East and with England, though at present Chicago can absorb all of Nebraska's surplus. Improvements in cattle cars and in shipping arrangements, however, will extend Nebraska's sales to the most distant markets, landing stock in good condition in London and Liverpool at most for 4

cents per pound. As an example of possibilities in prepared meats, an English farmer in Seward county two years ago, sent a small parcel of hams and bacon, cured in the English fashion, to the Manchester, England, market. The freight on his small shipment amounted to 3 cents per pound, and his returns were 25 cents per pound; and he was informed that any quantity would be received at that price. The dairy produce of Nebraska may be indefinitely increased. Already a considerable quantity of Nebraska cheese is shipped out of the state east and west, at one cheese-factory in Lancaster county, the product averaging 400 pounds of cheese per head of cattle, and selling at 10 cents per pound. In butter-making, dairymen among the hills, where the milk can be kept in a spring-house, are supposed to have had an advantage not obtainable on the prairie. Now, however, "Cooley's Creamer" puts the prairie dairyman on the same plane as those who live in mountain regions. The wind-mill pump, which costs from \$120 to \$160, keeps up a constant flow of coolest water from the recesses of the earth. The cooler is a large box, zinc-lined, with, between the zinc and the outer wood, a filling of charcoal. Placed beside the pump, the stream from the pump fills the box, and the overflow is carried off through a waste pipe, and so that it can be used for watering stock. This "spring-house" for the prairie is a simple apparatus, and not costly. But further: All who are acquainted with cattle know that under favorable conditions—and more favorable cannot be found than those of Nebraska—their increase is marvellous, calculation showing that 30 cows that would cost say \$1,200, in 10 years will develop into a herd worth \$30,000, allowing 10 per cent for losses, and the butter and cheese for the cost of maintenance. This is cattle farming, of course, in the agricultural region. In the great pastoral west the business is simpler. There, as yet, dairy products count for nothing; and it is the increase in the herds—cheaply fed and cheaply cared for—which yields the profit. With the cattle raised



in this western half of the state, there are good opportunities of profitable trade. Small herds can be selected, brought into the eastern parts, pastured on the way, and wintered on cheap corn and hay; and then they are in splendid condition for the meat market in the spring. In the farming region hogs go with cattle; and Nebraska farmers, with their Chester whites, Polands, and Berkshires, have as good stock as can be found in any state. Thousands of men find cattle profitable in Nebraska, and thousands of others may engage in the business with equal success. In the west especially the business is an immense one; but statistics are not readily accessible.

#### EXPERIENCE OF FLOCK-MASTERS.

Those who devote themselves to sheep speak highly of the results obtained. The sheep in its origin is native to the mountains. It likes the dry, pure air of the uplands, and avoids marshes. The lay of the land in Nebraska is, therefore, peculiarly adapted to sheep. On the breezy uplands, richly clothed with grasses, and in the pure, dry air, they are healthy and vigorous; the experience of Nebraska flock-masters, says the Hon. J. D. Jenkins of Fairmont, in Fillmore county, who has had large experience, being that, with good management, sheep return a profit of 50 per cent upon the investment. The pioneer flock-master of eastern Nebraska is the Hon. Moses Stocking, of Saunders county; and one yearly return he made, exhibited on a flock of 1,652 merinos—which breed he prefers, though long-wool breeds are now coming to have partizans—a profit of \$3,495. In Jefferson county, Messrs. C. and P. Jansen—leaders in the Mennonite settlement there—commenced sheep farming in 1875, purchasing in Iowa and Wisconsin a flock of 1,500 fair merino sheep, and in New York 20 to 30 thorough-bred merino rams. Since that time they have introduced new blood into the herd by importing additional thorough-bred rams, and have otherwise improved the flock by selling

off all inferior animals, and keeping only the best, so that now they have a flock of 2,300 high-class merinos. As an indication of the manner in which sheep improve in Nebraska, they furnish the following figures as the yield of wool per head of the sheep during the several years: In 1876 the clip averaged  $7\frac{3}{4}$  pounds per head; in 1877,  $8\frac{1}{4}$  pounds; in 1878, 9 pounds; and in 1879 the enormous figure was reached of 11 pounds and a fraction per head, from which they realized \$5,060. All through the state from south to north, and away west to the Republican Valley, and the forks of the Loup, examples of successful sheep farming are found; and information regarding them may be obtained by inquirers. For this pamphlet these examples must suffice; but it is not too much to say that the 50,000,000 pounds of foreign wool now imported into the United States could all be raised on these prairies.

#### SUCCESSFUL FRUIT CULTURE.

When the first settlers crossed the Missouri they would not believe that fruit would grow in Nebraska; and some years elapsed before even experiments were made. They gathered prolific crops of wild plums, grapes, and gooseberries; but they were slow to learn the lesson of nature, that, where the plum thicket was prolific of fruit, the apple orchard would also grow. There were among the settlers, however, men of culture, intelligence, and enterprize, who knew how to reason and how to act. These were the pioneer orchardists of the river counties. They planted, and their planting failed; but they persevered, and the result is a brilliant success. Orchards and vineyards crown the slopes of the hills; and Nebraska apples and Nebraska peaches vie with the best produced elsewhere. Take the practical test of the national competitions of the American Pomological Society. At Richmond, Virginia, so long ago as 1871, Nebraska exhibited one hundred and forty-six varieties of apples, fifteen of peaches, thirteen of pears, one of plums, and one of grapes, and was awarded the first premium for the best collection of fruit among all the States. A first prize was again taken

at the Boston meeting in 1873; at the Chicago meeting in 1875; and, at the International Exhibition in 1876, the judges awarded to Nebraska, prizes for eight varieties of pears, large, smooth, and well colored, and for 263 varieties of apples—the latter prize being “for the unusually large number of finely grown varieties, also for their general freedom from insect markings, fungus, and weather discolorations.” The success is undoubted, and the reason for the success is the co-adaptability of soil and climate—the peculiar deposits (before described), says Professor Aughey, making “a paradise for fruit culture, especially for the apple, plum, grape, and all the small fruits of the temperate zones. They luxuriate in soils like this, which has perfect natural drainage, and is composed of such materials. The most important of the few known deposits like this, are the wonderful, ever fertile valley of the Nile, and the celebrated loess of the Rhine, the latter of which supplies Europe with its finest wines and grapes. The results of experience demonstrate that this lacustrine deposit will excel in like manner,” and this deposit “prevails over more than three-fourths of the surface of Nebraska.” Not only in the river counties is horticulture successful—the report of the State Horticultural Society for 1877 showing orchards and vineyards away out on the prairie—in Lancaster, Pawnee, Saunders, Jefferson, Seward, York, Fillmore, Buffalo, Hall, and Burt counties, or up to the 100th meridian. The same report gives a list of 53 varieties of apples as best for Nebraska; twenty-three varieties of pears; seven varieties of cherries, the best being *Early* and *Late Richmond*; for plums, the *Gages*—green, yellow, and brown—the *Lombard*, the *Minor*, and *Wild-geese*; for peaches a list of eight, (for preference at starting seedlings), and for grapes, the *Concord*, *Delaware* and *Hartford Prolific*. As a closer guide to those who are setting out orchards for the first time, the society recommends 7 apples: *Red June*, *Cooper's Early White*, *Maiden's Blush*, *Fameuse*, *Rawle's Jennette*, *Wine Sap*, and *Ben Davis*; and, those who desire more variety,

they recommend to add: *Red Astracan*, *Rambo*, *White Winter Pearmain*, and *Sweeting*.

#### PISCICULTURE.

One acre of water stocked with suitable fish is more profitable than the best ten acres of land on which the sun shines. The native fish of Nebraska are not of high quality, and there is room and verge enough in the home market for extensive piscicultural operations. There are clear rivers and creeks—in some parts small lakes, and everywhere ponds in which certain species of useful fresh water fish can be made for ever abundant. To show how fish will increase even when left only to their natural fecundity, instance a consignment of perch, bass, and pickerel which, a few years ago, were being sent over the Union Pacific Railroad to California. By an accident, the car was overturned into the Elkhorn river. The fry got into the stream, and there they have multiplied amazingly (notwithstanding illegal netting, and spread into tributary streams and ponds. At a late meeting of the Legislature, a Fish Commission was appointed to assist individuals in fish culture, and to protect their interests. Already many persons have established hatcheries. In Cass county, Mr. J. G. Romine has ponds where at the beginning of this year trout had obtained a weight of one-and-a-half pounds; in Otoe county, ex-Chief Justice Mason has formed on his farm a large fish pond; in Nemaha county, Hon. J. H. Broady and Mr. W. H. Hoover are stocking a clear deep pond with a surface area of 10 acres; and there have been some successful experiments away in the Republican valley, made by Mr. H. S. Kaley. Many who settle in Nebraska may find in fish culture a pleasant and profitable avocation.

#### THE HONEY BEE AND THE PRAIRIE FLOWERS.

A gentleman who has travelled extensively in the old world and the new world, tasted honey in Nebraska, the product of the



prairie flowers, and he said: "This is as the honey of Hybla—the celebrated honey of the Mediterranean countries, with the same aromatic flavor." The honey of the prairie flowers is peculiarly rich; and bees work on the prairie and in the timber belts on the streams to great profit. To attend to bees—except when the apiary is on a large scale, as it is now and again in eastern Nebraska north and south of the Platte—is an avocation for the women of the household: one in which they take delight, and one which not only puts money in the purse, but adds to the luxuries of the home. The bees begin to work on the wild flowers among the timber at the opening of spring; but the true honey season of Nebraska is July, August, and September, when the flowers of the prairie—milkweed, heartsease, goldenrod, sunflower, and many others are in their fullest bloom, though by planting rape and other early blooming honey flowers, May and June are brought into the honey period. In the river counties of Nebraska, large numbers of bees are kept, and in the neighborhood of Omaha alone, there are 2000 swarms. At the apiary of Mr. Geo. M. Hawley, near Lincoln, there were in the spring of 1879, 168 swarms of pure Italian bees. Up to August he had sold 100 swarms, and had 175 left—the difference being the increase, besides the honey. In many of the interior counties there are bees, and wherever they are tried they are found profitable.

#### WILD GAME OF THE PLAINS.

The farmer cares little for game, and the more room there is for the larger game, the less for the agriculturist. Nevertheless, there are times and seasons when the farmer may properly recreate himself with sport; and there are hundreds of travellers and tourists who visit the plains for the purposes of hunting. Therefore, a brief paragraph on the wild game of the plains is here inserted. Buffalo shooting is falling into disrepute. It is easily accomplished, and is something like butchery. Buffalo, however, are

still found in the south-west. The great elk (*Cervus Canadensis*) is the noblest game animal of the plains; and it is a huntsman's feat to circumvent and kill this monarch of the prairie. Sometimes the elk weighs 700 to 800 lbs, and its antlers are magnificent. Its range is in the west from the south to the north, feeding on the high prairies and frequenting also the ravines. The antelope, (*Antilocapra Americana*) in plentiful herds, and fleet as the winds, is found everywhere west of Plum creek; and the white-tailed deer (*Cervus Leucurus*), and the black-tailed (*Cervus Macrotis*) are denizens of the same region—the white-tailed being found over the whole state. In the far west and among the ravines, the big-horn sheep (*Ovis Montana*) will now and again fall to the rifle. The time for hunting is from the first of October to the end of December, the law protecting the animals during the remainder of the year. The jack rabbit, or prairie hare (*Leporidae Campensis*) is common. He is a strong and fleet animal, and is good game for coursing, and only to be run down by the strongest and fleetest greyhounds. The little gray rabbit is also common, and affords excellent shooting; and away in the west, the sage rabbit. In the timber, two species of lynx are found—rarely in the settled parts of the state, and more commonly on the frontier; and also in the same localities, the large white and gray wolf. The cayote, or prairie wolf, is also worth hunting, the animal having all the cunning of the fox and more than the wit of the prairie foxes, of which there are three species, the red fox, the prairie fox and the kit fox. Some of the streams are still populous with beavers and others. The game birds of Nebraska are plentiful; and in the season afford sport in abundance. The wild turkey is the noblest of them all. Civilization drives it away, but in the wilder parts of the state, the bird is common enough, and where the woods are thickening in the river counties, its re-appearance is beginning to be noted. The prairie chicken—the grouse of the prairie—are everywhere; and away out on the frontier, the large sage hen. Quail are plentiful and readily shot; and there are several plovers which are worth

the powder and shot of the sportsman. In early spring and late fall, large flocks of wild geese are migrating across the state, and resting during the journey on the rivers, creeks, and ponds. Mallard, teal, and many other species of wild duck are plentiful during the same seasons. Of cranes, there are four or five species—the sand-hill crane, the largest, being accounted an excellent table bird. There are numerous hawks, and the bald-headed eagle is frequently seen in the less settled parts of the country. As to fish, though common kinds are abundant in the creeks, there are none that an angler would regard with favor, except in the north-west where trout become common in the streams. But briefly, for the sportsman and the naturalist, there is a great field in Nebraska where one or two seasons can be spent with pleasure and profit.

#### THREE DISTRICTS IN NEBRASKA.

The foregoing narrative describes Nebraska in general terms, and if the reader will study the following figures, he will see the progress and prospects of the State further exemplified, but in a different way. A natural division of the state is into three great sections: north-eastern Nebraska, south-eastern Nebraska, and the grazing region west. Speaking broadly of these several areas, it may be said that the western grazing country is somewhat less than half of the area of the state—north-eastern Nebraska being a little larger than the south-eastern, though the present western limit of lands in cultivation is not so far west in the north as in the south. In the south the agricultural area extends almost to the western boundary of the state; and, indeed, in what is now the grazing region, the processes which have made the eastern half arable, are in rapid progress.

#### NORTH-EASTERN NEBRASKA.

Here there are 28 counties which in 1860 had a population of 10,500; in 1870, 51,088; and in 1879, 108,264. And wealth has increased

with the increasing population. Twenty-five years ago settlement began on the Missouri bottoms. On the whole wide prairie there was nothing which civilized man counts as wealth; and yet now the property is assessed at—and assessed values are but as one in three of real values—\$30,441,370—Omaha with its population of 25,000 contributing several millions. In 1870, the land in cultivation in the whole state was 647,031 acres; but in 1879 in this quarter of the state, the figures are 1,168,846 acres. The live stock now owned by the people number 48,963 horses; 4,200 mules; 141,281 cattle; 46,769 sheep; and 134,988 swine; and the wheat and corn product for the year 1879 (estimating for certain counties which have not made returns on the basis of the 1878 returns), is 5,804,749 bushels of wheat, and 16,297,598 bushels of corn. Of cultivated timber there are 26,744 acres; apple trees, 306,143; pears, 5,582; peach trees, 39,584; plum trees, 48,564; cherry trees, 31,734; grape vines, 49,444; and 1,104 miles of live hedge.

#### SOUTH-EASTERN NEBRASKA

with 27 counties has a still more favorable record. The population of this section in 1860 was 16,539; in 1870, 71,731; and in 1879, 201,976; and in 1879 the assessed valuation of the property in this section is \$40,483,979. The land in cultivation is 1,994,458 acres; the horses number 100,574; the mules, 10,367; the cattle, 199,146; sheep, 70,285; swine, 523,683, while the wheat product (estimating as before for certain counties that have not made returns) is 8,722,105 bushels, and corn 20,698,982 bushels. The acreage in cultivated timber is 62,769, and of fruit there are 967,457 apple trees; 30,445 pear trees; 1,209,957 peach trees; 96,738 plum trees, and 185,485 cherry trees; 158,367 grape vines, and 5,497 miles of live hedge. From

#### THE GRAZING REGION WEST

the statistics are not sufficiently complete to warrant their setting forth, though here reside the balance of the population (the cen-



cus of the state for 1879 gives the total population as 386,410 as against 122,993 in 1870, or an increase during the nine years of 201 per cent, which is something unprecedented in the history of agricultural settlement, and most convincing testimony to the excellence of the land), the chief industry being the raising of beef cattle in immense herds, though in the valleys there is considerable farming, and as settlement proceeds, and pioneers push westward, the whole State will be devoted to mixed farming. The figures which are given must show those

#### WHO WANT HOMES IN THE WEST

that they cannot settle in a better state than Nebraska. There is enough and to spare for all the people; and an accumulation of wealth marvellous in so young a state. Those who have money to invest largely in stock may go to the grazing plains; those whose means are more moderate should take a farm; while those who propose to engage in trade and manufacture will find openings in one or other of the towns. Nebraska is, and will always be, to a great extent an agricultural country, deriving its wealth from the soil. But there is

#### MONEY INVESTED IN MANUFACTURES

of various kinds; and there is room for more, especially in the manufactures which are connected with agriculture, as wagon and carriage making, agricultural implements, starch, pork packing, and dairy produce. A large field is indeed open, which only needs capital and intelligence and skill to develop.

#### THE CENTRE OF THE RAILROADS OF THE COUNTRY.

The railroad system of Nebraska permeates the state, and strikes out over the continent east, west, north and south, to the seaboard. Wherever there is a market for the surplus products of the state, there are railroads to that market. In the South Platte railroad

system the principal railroad is that of the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad Company in Nebraska. The main line of this company commences at Plattsmouth, on the Missouri river (where at this time a bridge is being constructed which will connect the B. & M. in Nebraska with the C. B. & Q. in Iowa), with a branch from Omaha which joins the main line at Oreapolis, 4 miles west of Plattsmouth. The line then follows the course of the Platte river to the mouth of Salt Creek, whence it proceeds over Salt Creek valley through Lancaster county to Lincoln, the state capital; and thence westward over the prairie through Lancaster, Saline, Fillmore, Clay, Adams, and Kearney counties to a junction with the Union Pacific road at Kearney, in Buffalo county. The Beatrice branch of the B. & M. road starts from Crete, in Saline county, and runs south along the valley of the Big Blue to Beatrice in Gage county; and the same company, under the name of the Republican Valley Co., has built a line from Hastings, in Adams county, south over the prairie to the Republican valley, and thence west along the valley to Naponee, on the west line of Franklin county, which road is now being pushed forward as rapidly as possible westward to Denver, in Colorado, and a contract for 100 miles west of Naponee has recently been made. It is also proposed to continue this line eastward from the point where it strikes the Republican valley south of Hastings, to Beatrice, in Gage county. The Nebraska railroad has at present its initial point in Nemaha city, in Nemaha county, and runs north on the west bank of the Missouri river through Brownville, in Nemaha county, to Nebraska city, in Otoe county; thence westward through Otoe and Lancaster counties to Lincoln; and thence through Seward, York, Hamilton, and Merrick counties to Central city, where it connects with the U. P., and the track is now surveyed north 20 miles to Fullerton, the centre and county seat of Nance County. The Atchison & Nebraska railroad starts at Atchison, in Kansas, and runs through Richardson, Pawnee, Johnson, Gage, and

Lancaster counties to Lincoln; and from the capital city this company is now building a road, under the name of the Lincoln & North Western railroad, through Lancaster, Saline, and Butler counties to Columbus, in Platte county, where it connects with the U. P. The Omaha & Republican Valley railroad, a branch from the U. P., runs through Douglas, Saunders, Butler, and Polk counties to Osceola, the county seat of the last-named county, and a branch is now building from Valparaiso, in Saunders county, to Lincoln. The St. Joseph & Denver railroad, which starts at St. Joseph in Missouri, runs westward through the north tier of counties in Kansas, and enters Nebraska in Jefferson county, passing through Thayer, Nuckolls, Adams, and Hall counties to a junction with the U. P. at Grand Island; and the company is now building a branch from Marysville, in Kansas, along the valley of the Big Blue river to Beatrice, in Gage county. North of the Platte river the Union Pacific is the main line of railroad; and, starting from Omaha, its track is along the Platte valley to the western line of the state, a distance of 475 miles; and this company is now building a branch road from Jackson, in Platte county, northward through Platte and Madison counties to Norfolk, in the last-named county, with a branch running to Albion, in Boone county. The Union Pacific is further building a branch from Grand Island to St. Paul, the county seat of Howard county. The Omaha & North-western railroad runs north-west through Douglas, Washington, and Burt counties, the present terminus being at Oakland, in Burt county. The Sioux City & Pacific railroad runs from Missouri valley in Iowa, westward across the Missouri river through Washington county to Fremont, in Dodge county, where it connects with the U. P.; and the Elkhorn Valley railroad runs from Fremont up the valley of the Elkhorn river, through Dodge, Cuming, Stanton, and Madison counties to Oakdale, in Antelope county, with a branch running from the main line to Norfolk, in Madison county, and Pierce, the county seat of

Pierce county. The Covington, Columbus, and Black Hills railroad runs from Covington, which is immediately opposite Sioux City, in Iowa, through Dakota county to Ponca, the county seat of Dixon county; and—the road having been recently sold to the Sioux City & St. Paul railroad—it is now proposed to run it further west through the northern counties of Nebraska. This is a catalogue-description of the railroad system of Nebraska; but the map will show better than any description how thoroughly the state is being covered with a net-work of roads, binding it in one, and making all its interests common. No state at Nebraska's stage of growth has ever before had such railroad facilities, for the development of state commerce and foreign trade, through the Pacific roads west, and through the gate cities of Omaha, Plattsmouth, and Nebraska city, east and south-east. Nor is this all. A new era of railroad building seems to have come to the state; and more railroads will still be built until there is not a corner of the state which is not penetrated by the iron way—the modern highway of nations—and bringing all the people, as will be seen is largely the case at present, into direct communication with Lincoln, the state capital.

#### SCHOOL SYSTEM OF THE STATE.

Nebraska provides liberally for the education of the young. In the first place, there is the common school system, which penetrates everywhere. There is a normal school, for the training of teachers, at Peru, in Nemaha county; and, at the head of the state system is the University at Lincoln, where the higher education, after the payment of matriculation fees, is free to students. The educational endowments, as shown by the statistics presented to the legislature in January, 1879, comprise common school land, 2,443,148 acres; agricultural college land, 89,452 acres; University land, 45,119 acres; normal school land, 12,800 acres; and the school fund in money, \$2,120,182; the revenue applied to common school purposes for the year 1878 amounting to \$629,068. The



common schools grow with the state, as the following table will show:

GROWTH OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM.

Years	Av. No. days of School	Districts	Children	Teachers	Value of School Property
1870	46	797	32789	536	\$ 178604
1872	79	1410	51123	1512	817163
1874	88	2215	72991	2735	1553926
1876	90	2513	86191	3366	1585736
1878	92	2690	104030	3730	1806466

Besides the public provision, the Episcopalians have a college for girls—Brownell Hall at Omaha; and for boys, the Bishop Talbot college at Nebraska City. The Catholics have a noble college at Omaha; the Congregationalists one at Crete, in Saline county; and the M. E. Church is about to erect a college at York, in York county. The state institution for the deaf and dumb is at Omaha; and for the blind at Nebraska City. The sum of the account is that every child in Nebraska has within reach a sound education which shall fit him and her to perform the duties of life.

## STATE INSTITUTIONS.

The capitol is at Lincoln; and work is just now being commenced upon an addition to the present state house, the legislature, at its latest session, having voted \$60,000 for the purpose. The University, a fine Italian building, is also in Lincoln; and the state Insane Asylum is about two miles away, located in a charming country; the Penitentiary, which is a castellated structure, is about one and a half miles from Lincoln; the Blind Asylum is at Nebraska City, and a Deaf and Dumb Institute at Omaha; and a reform school is to be erected at Kearney.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACQUIRING LAND.

There are millions of acres of government land yet open to pre-emption, homestead and timber-culture entries in Nebraska; but

those who want these will have to go considerably west. All over the state the public school lands are offered for sale and lease. The quantities are named in a preceding paragraph; and information with regard to them may be obtained by writing to F. M. DAVIS, State Commissioner of Public Lands and Buildings, at Lincoln, Nebraska. The minimum price at which these lands are sold is \$7.00 per acre, on twenty years' time, at six per cent. interest; and leases are on appraised values. During the years 1877 and 1878 the lands sold were 26,819 acres; and leased, 100,918; and the sales and leases during this year are doubling upon these figures.

#### UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD LANDS.

For detailed information about these lands, written or personal application should be made to the Land Commissioner, U. P. R. R., Omaha, Nebraska. This company owns 3,000,000 acres of fertile lands in central and western Nebraska, which are sold for cash, or on a credit of ten years, at six per cent interest, with gradual payments of principal and interest. The prices range from \$2 to \$10 per acre, on ten years' credit, "according to quality, location, timber, and nearness to market;" and a deduction of ten per cent. from credit prices is made to cash purchasers.

#### BURLINGTON & MISSOURI RIVER RAILROAD LANDS.

For detailed information about these lands, address or apply to the Land Commissioner, B. & M. R. R., Lincoln, Nebraska. This company has remaining of its land grant of more than two million acres, about 1,000,000 acres south of the Platte river, in the rich south-eastern section, and in the north-eastern section north of the Platte. The north-eastern lands, of which there are about 650,000 acres, range from \$1 to \$6 per acre, on ten years' time, with discount from these prices on six years and two years' credit, and for cash. The balance of the B. & M. lands in south-eastern Nebraska are sold at from \$3 to \$10, on ten years' credit,

with discounts off for cash or shorter time of credit. The reader will perceive that there are still opportunities to acquire

HOMES AND FARMS IN NEBRASKA,

U. S. government land, state land and railroad land, free or on exceedingly low terms; but the progress made by the state—as its history demonstrates—is proof enough that only a short time will elapse before the era of cheap lands is closed forever.









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